



# NORTH DAKOTA GUARDIAN

Volume 2, Issue 3

July 2009

## Never Forgotten

Fallen Heroes Remembered  
for Sacrifices, Service



» Also Inside:

50 Years at the Auger Inn, Strengthening Families Through Partnership

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Phone: 701-333-2195 Fax: 701-333-2017  
Digital photos should be at least 300 dpi.

## On the Cover



**Memorial Day:** Pvt. Matthew Gerenz stands at attention after playing Taps at the Memorial Day Ceremony at the Veterans Cemetery in Mandan, N.D. Gerenz is currently attending basic training in Fort Benning, Ga. Here, he is dressed in his Century High School Patriot band marching uniform. After completing his Advanced Individual Training next summer, Gerenz will become a member of the N.D. Army Medical Detachment. (Photo by Bill Prokopyk).



**Command Chief Master Sgt. David Harmon**

119th Wing Command Chief  
North Dakota National Guard

## Staying True to Our Mission Statement

**W**hat is a Mission Statement? A mission statement is a brief, written statement reflecting the purpose of a company or organization. Ideally, a mission statement guides the actions of the organization, spells out its overall goal, provides a sense of direction and guides decision making for all levels of management.

The mission statement for the North Dakota National Guard is: **Provide ready units, individuals, and equipment supporting our communities, state and nation.**

With the recent and ongoing events of the 2009 flood, the mission statement for the North Dakota National Guard has never rung more true.

On March 22, I attended a chief's course in Washington, D.C. From a distance, I watched the battle begin as our state began to hold back the forces of rising rivers in North Dakota. The part of our mission statement that states: **Provide ready units, individuals, and equipment supporting our communities**, was more than evident as I watched the national news display our Airmen and Soldiers providing ready units, individuals and equipment to support our communities in this epic battle. As our Guardsmen fought rising waters and sandbagged in blizzard conditions, I could not have been more proud to explain to the other 26 chief master sergeants in the course, "This is what the North Dakota National Guard does!" The whole nation was watching.

**Provide ready units, individuals, and equipment supporting our state.** As flood conditions progressed, it was evident that it was not going to be only a Red River Valley event. Soon other communities in the state were affected. There were close to 20 different locations within the state that experienced flood-related events. The Minot area, Bismarck/Mandan, LaMoure, Linton, Niche, Pembina, Lisbon, Valley City, Jamestown, Kindred, Davenport and more continued to develop problems. It now became an issue of the North Dakota National Guard supporting the state of North Dakota. Ready Airmen and Soldiers were sent in all four directions with the equipment and the skills needed to hold back the waters of record flooding.

**Provide ready units, individuals, and equipment supporting our nation.** The North Dakota Air National Guard currently has over 200 Airmen deployed throughout the world. These countries include Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Alaska, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The North Dakota Army National Guard is also supporting our nation at great lengths. This August over 700 Soldiers will be deploying to Kosovo for a year. In addition, we just celebrated the return of the 191<sup>st</sup> Military Police Company. Within this group of brave Soldiers, five were awarded purple hearts and two were inducted into the Sgt. Audie Murphy Club for their courageous actions while deployed.

In addition, the Bismarck-based element of Company C of the 2nd Battal-

ion (Assault), 285th Aviation Regiment received mobilization orders. About 50 Soldiers with the unit are expected to mobilize in October in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

It goes without saying how proud I am of the Airmen and Soldiers of this organization and all they continue to do to support our community, state and nation.

In closing, I would like to address the North Dakota National Guard vision statement:

**A dynamic, relevant force where everyone is a trained, mentored and empowered leader.**

To the leadership and senior noncommissioned officers, I ask that you provide the training, mentoring, skills and trust necessary to empower the junior Airmen and Soldiers of the North Dakota National Guard to succeed.

To the junior Airmen and Soldiers of this organization, it will be your responsibility to write the future legacy of the North Dakota National Guard.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David H. Harmon".

Command Chief Master Sgt.  
David Harmon



Sgt. Ann Knudson

Members of the N.D. National Guard Ceremonial Platoon fire a French 75 millimeter cannon, WWI vintage, for a 21-cannon salute for the 2009 Memorial Day service at the North Dakota Veterans Cemetery May 25.

### Memorial Day Ceremony Honors Resting Heroes

More than 200 motorcycles driven by military Veterans and supporters rolled in to the N.D. Veterans Cemetery in Mandan on Memorial Day, prefacing the somber yet celebratory events to come. It was a day to remember and to honor, and it was flavored with the special service of the enlisted members who have served and died.

This year marks the Year of the Non-commissioned Officer, which recognizes NCOs' "commitment to service and willingness to make great sacrifices on behalf of our nation." Two of the top NCOs in North Dakota's Army and Air Guard spoke during the annual ceremony, which also was marked by a flyover by N.D. Army National Guard Black Hawks, Taps played in Echo by Bismarck's Century High School, a 21-cannon salute by the Guard's Ceremonial Honor Platoon and a conglomeration of Veterans and service groups that posted, raised and retired the colors.

Command Chief Master Sgt. Paula Johnson, the N.D. National Guard's state command chief, opened the ceremony. As the highest-ranking NCO in the Air Guard, Johnson is responsible for Airmen's welfare, readiness and morale as well as proper utilization and progress for enlisted Airmen.

Command Sgt. Maj. Francis Brager, who serves with the top-ranking NCOs in the Army Guard, provided the keynote speech during the Memorial Day event.

"On this special day, Memorial Day, in-

stead of seeing a stone monument, we see the faces of all those who, over the years, sacrificed their lives in defense of freedom," he said. "We see the faces and honor the memories of those who lost their lives in the two World Wars. We see the faces of those who perished with their ships in Pearl Harbor. We see the brave faces of many young men and women who died in Korea and Vietnam. We remember the events of Sept. 11, 2001, and those whose lives were taken by terrorists. We see the faces of those who sacrificed their lives in Afghanistan and Iraq."

Those faces — enlisted, NCOs and officers alike — were remembered and honored on Memorial Day, although their spirits live on in those in uniform still today.

### N.D. National Guard Aviation Unit Receives Mobilization Orders

Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, North Dakota National Guard adjutant general, announced today that the Bismarck-based element of Company C of the 2nd Battalion (Assault), 285th Aviation Regiment has received mobilization orders. About 50 North Dakota Soldiers with the unit are expected to mobilize in October in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"Our commitment to the Global War on Terrorism continues with the mobilization of this aviation unit. Our aviation crews and support personnel have a great reputation and were instrumental in providing professional aviation support during our recent flood-fighting efforts," Sprynczynatyk said.

Company C is divided between the

North Dakota Army National Guard and the Utah Army National Guard. The Utah element, based in West Jordan, Utah, will join the North Dakota unit to form one company while mobilized. Each state will mobilize with five UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters. Typically, an aviation assault battalion flies missions to transport service members and equipment.

"During their mobilization, we have secured additional Black Hawks in order to meet any state emergencies and other flight missions, as required," Sprynczynatyk said. "We continue to successfully fulfill both our national and state missions thanks to the dedication of our Soldiers, the support of their employers and Families, and the shared resources among the states."

Capt. Douglas Larsen, of Granville, N.D., commands Company C and 1st Sgt. Daniel Marquart, of Bismarck, serves as the senior enlisted Soldier.

A formal send-off will take place in October, and details will be forthcoming. The unit is expected to begin its yearlong mobilization with training at Fort Sill, Okla., before deploying to Iraq.

### National Guard and Reserve Members, Families Nominate Employers

Three North Dakota employers have been selected as Semi-Finalists for the 2009 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. The award is the U.S. Government's highest recognition given to employers for exceptional support of their employees serving in the Guard and Reserve. The Secretary of Defense Employer Freedom Award is significant because only members of the National Guard and Reserve or their family members are eligible to nominate their employers for the award.

Semi-Finalists are Bismarck Floor to Ceiling Store, Microsoft Fargo, and the West Fargo Police Department.

Bismarck Floor to Ceiling Store was nominated in the small business category by Darrel Heimes, father of Brian Heimes, a U.S. Army Reservist who was deployed to Iraq. Brian had previously been a member of the N.D. Army National Guard and had numerous training activities, qualification schools and one preparation for deployment. The nomination reads, in part, "Gene and Barbara Storbakken, owners of the Floor to Ceiling Store, encouraged Brian to get as much training as he could and told him that that 'he would always



Right, Kevin Iverson presents the "Above and Beyond" award to visiting Chief Operating Officer of Microsoft Corporation (national, not just Fargo), Kevin Turner. Behind Turner is Eugene Orson, Chair of the Fargo Region Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Committee. Brig. Gen. Alan Palmer from the Fargo ESGR Committee was also present.

have his job when he returned'. The Storbakkens also checked in on Brian's young family during his deployment to make sure they were safe and warm."

Microsoft Fargo was nominated in the large business category by software engineer Justin Abel, a lieutenant in the N.D. National Guard's 426th Signal Company. Abel says that Microsoft continues health/dental benefits and makes up the difference between his military pay and his normal salary when he's on duty. The company features their "citizen soldiers" in corporate newsletters, sponsors recognition events and actively recruits personnel with military experience. Other employees cited Microsoft team members' support to their families during deployments by inviting spouses to corporate events, assisting with household maintenance and even donating airline mileage to allow a young wife and child to visit her spouse at Ft Carson, Colo., prior to deployment to Iraq. Microsoft Fargo received an "Above and Beyond" award during Assistant Secretary of Defense Thomas Hall's visit to Fargo in 2008.

The West Fargo Police Department was nominated in the Public Sector Employer category. N.D. Air National Guard Chief Master Sergeant Michael Reitan also serves as the Assistant Chief of Police in West Fargo. He states that Mayor Rich Mattern and Chief Arland Rasmussen are very supportive of military members and families during deployment periods. They are very flexible in responding to no-notice or short-notice military tour of duty assignments. The Department received an "Above and Beyond" award during Assistant Secretary of Defense Thomas Hall's

visit to Fargo in 2008.

The 3 North Dakota employers are among 131 Semi-Finalists from across the nation, selected from more than 3,200 nominations submitted by National Guard and Reserve members or their families for outstanding employer support. From this field, a national review board will select 35 finalists for the award. A national selection board comprised of senior defense officials and business leaders will then select the award's 15 recipients. The Department of Defense will announce the 2009 finalists

and the award recipients later this summer. The 2009 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Awards will be presented at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., September 17th at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Center.

### Memorial March Held to Remember Service Members

At 9:38 a.m., June 6, family and friends braved the rain and wind and began their 9-mile march in remembrance of service members killed in combat. They took their first steps in the second Memorial Road March in honor of their loved ones, beginning their journey from the Bank of North Dakota in Bismarck.

"This memorial march is about people remembering our Fallen Heroes and thinking about our Soldiers still serving," said Sheila Richter, mother of Sgt. Travis Van Zoest, and organizer of this year's event.

While the march honors all fallen North Dakota service members as well as those still serving, the date and time have significance to the 1-188th Air Defense Artillery. Three years ago today, at 9:38 a.m., Sgt. Travis A. Van Zoest, 21, and Spc. Curtis R. Mehrer, 21, were killed in Afghanistan when an improvised explosive device detonated. Cpl. Nathan J. Goodiron, 25, and Cpl. Christopher K. Kleinwachter, 29, also were killed during the 1-188th ADA-SECFOR deployment.

The 9-mile march began at the bank, with the group walking over the new Liberty Memorial Bridge that was dedicated to all Veterans, followed by a short stop about a mile away at the McDonald's located on Memorial Highway, which was also dedicated to the fallen Soldiers. The group proceeded approximately four more miles to the Post and then finished the march at the North Dakota Veterans' Cemetery in Mandan.

According to Richter, the route was chosen due to the connection each stop has with the military.

"It is important that people remember that we are still at war and we still have our service members overseas," she said.

Despite the weather, the large group was happy to take the opportunity to honor the brave veterans.

"If they can stick it out for a year in horrible conditions, we can stick it out for a few hours," said Joyce Mehrer, mother of Spc. Curtis Mehrer, also noting that last year's weather began similarly, but ended with sunshine once they reached the cemetery.

### Keepsake DVDs to be Included In Next Month's Guardian

The August issue of the North Dakota Guardian will feature two DVDs; one containing footage and stories from the last four years of N.D. National Guard missions and events and the second looking back on the recent flood operations that saw more than 2,400 Guardsmen called up for state active duty.

The "Call to Service II" DVD can be acquired through the Visual Information branch, Sgt. Jonathan Haugen, if problems are experienced with shipping of the Guardian. Please contact Sgt. Haugen at 701-333-2188.



Marchers begin their journey outside the Bank of North Dakota en route to the N.D. Veterans Cemetery.

# In the Spotlight:

## Porter Named TRADOC Instructor of the Year

By Sgt. Kerry Larsen, 68th Troop Command &  
Sgt. Arlene Bracken, 164th Regional Training Institute

Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Charles Porter, of the 164<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, received the highest instructor recognition award possible from the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) by being selected as TRADOC Instructor of the Year 2008 for the Army National Guard, beating out all other National Guard instructors in the United States.

Porter trains more than 150 Soldiers each year as a full-time instructor at the N.D. National Guard's 164<sup>th</sup> Regional Training Institute at Camp Grafton Training Center. He is certified to teach a number of military operational specialty (MOS) courses, including 21W (carpentry/masonry specialist), 21R (interior electrician) and 21T (technical engineer) occupations. Porter has worked as an instructor at the RTI for more than three years, bringing three years of active duty experience and more than 13 years in the N.D. National Guard.

"Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Porter not only placed another feather in our hat for the 164<sup>th</sup> RTI, but the N.D. National Guard as well," said



Courtesy Photo

Right to left, Sgt. 1st Class Charles Porter accepts the 2008 TRADOC Instructor of the Year plaque from Lt. Gen. David Valcourt, TRADOC deputy commanding general during an awards ceremony in Newport News, Va., May 5.

Command Sgt. Maj. Orville Wang, 164<sup>th</sup> RTI enlisted commandant. "His award speaks highly of our school and the caliber of our instructors."

The road to winning the prestigious TRADOC Instructor of the Year award is extensive. Porter first competed amongst 52 other instructors from the 164<sup>th</sup> RTI to become Instructor of the Quarter for the North Dakota installation. The four Instructor of the Quarter winners then competed for the RTI's Instructor of the Year award.

Once the top regional instructors from each state are determined, they go on to compete at a national level, having their nominations for TRADOC Instructor of the Year reviewed by National Guard Bureau (NGB). NGB forwards their top three selections to TRADOC, where a winner is determined.

The criteria for the Instructor of the Year competition requires candidates to submit a 15-20 minute videotape of themselves presenting a section of training to their students, as well as a supervisor's nomination, biographical information and an essay from the candidate on their greatest contribution and greatest challenge as an instructor.

"My greatest contribution as an instructor is passing on knowledge and experience to other Soldiers," Porter said. "We (at the RTI) are teaching valuable trade skills that not only benefit the Soldier in their units, but also at home for personal use."

Porter recently traveled to Newport News, Va., to receive the TRADOC Instructor of the Year award during the Army Training and Educational Development Summit. Prior to this year, TRADOC had not presented its recognition locally — plaques and coins were sent to the winner's respective installation for presentation.

The 164<sup>th</sup> RTI received a "Fully Accredited" rating last year during an accreditation review by the Engineer School at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., by achieving success in all evaluated areas and scoring in the highest percentile for U.S. Army training standards. The RTI provides 25 fully-accredited engineer courses each year with more than 200 classes scheduled annually and its reach spans far beyond North Dakota's borders, with 60 percent of all Army Reserve and Army National Guard engineers across the United States receiving training there.



# Walsvik Advances to National Guard Best Warrior Competition

By Sgt. Kerry Larsen  
68th Troop Command

**S**pc. Adam Walsvik, of the 188th Engineer Company (Vertical), has won the Region VI Best Warrior competition earning him the right to advance to the National Guard level competition in Fort Benning, Ga., in August. Walsvik, a carpentry/masonry specialist in his unit, competed in the Soldier category for the event beating out six Soldiers from South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Washington, Oregon and Alaska.

The competition tests both physical and mental skills, including an Army Physical Fitness Test, day and night land navigation exercises, weapons qualification, obstacle course, a written essay and various other challenges.

"I was really surprised when they announced my name as the winner. I was only leading by four points, which shows how close the competition was. All the Soldiers competing really knew what they were doing, so it's really an honor to get to move on to the next round," Walsvik said. I thought the land navigation course was very tough, although I expect the physical challenge to be more intense down at Fort Benning."

Walsvik is preparing for the National Guard level competition where he will go up against the winners from the other five regions. This is a three-week event, with week one being the Best Warrior competition, hosted by the National Guard Warrior Training Center. Week two consists of traveling and visiting the nation's capitol along with visits to many governmental and army leaders offices for personal meetings. The final week culminates at the National Enlisted Association Conference, in Rochester, Minn., where the winners are selected.

Should Walsvik prevail in Rochester, he will then compete at the Army level competition, where 20 Active Duty and Army Reserve Soldiers and one National Guard Soldier compete for the top spot. Winners of the army level event are announced at the annual Association of the United States Army Meeting and Exposition, scheduled for Oct. 5-7 at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C. Last year's winners were both from reserve components. Staff Sgt. Michael T. Noyce Merino, Army National Guard, was named the Army's Non-commissioned Officer of the Year and Spc. David R. Obray, U.S. Army Reserve, was named Soldier of the Year.

Next year's Region VI competition will be in Alaska with North Dakota hosting the event in 2011.



Spc. Adam Walsvik traverses multiple obstacles during the regional "Best Warrior" competition in Fort Lewis, Wash. He will go on to compete at the National Guard level competition in Fort Benning, Ga., in August.

Courtesy Photos

# Touching the African Sky

By Connie Sprynczynatyk,  
Family Executive Council

**M**ichael Ashalley-Neequaye smiled and lightly waved outstretched hands over his head as he described the excitement a Soldier feels toward the end of a deployment, thinking about returning home to family and friends.

"You want to touch the sky," he said.

Seth Bodu agreed. "When you are nominated for deployment, you are at first so excited and happy. You do not know what new things you will see and do and you are busy getting ready and soon it's time to go. Then you finally get home and..."

But I'm getting ahead of this story.

In 2004, the N.D. National Guard entered into a partnership with Ghana, a country only slightly larger in land mass but with many times our state's population. The State Partnership Program is funded by the United States Department of Defense and its goals are to develop and strengthen democracy. Programs begin with a military-to-military focus, although as a program matures it is common to include civilian partnerships.

Over the last five years, more than 200 people from Ghana and North Dakota have participated in 75 events on topics ranging from emergency medical services, aircraft safety and maintenance, noncommissioned officer development and emergency management, to media relations, engineer training and, this year, family support.

## "It Changes You"

Rob Keller, Director of Service Member and Family Support for the N.D. National Guard, Spc. Tonya Sigl, State Youth Coordinator and I (representing the Family Executive Council) found ourselves in a family program seminar in mid-May surrounded by new faces, wilting in a steaming hot environment and enjoying a blinding flash of the obvious: The issues, challenges, laughter, excitement,

**"The issues, challenges, laughter, excitement, dread and fears our Airmen, Soldiers and Families experience are common no matter where in the world you live."**

Mawunea said, "It changes you."

During pre-deployment, Ghanaian service members experience a flurry of requirements similar to ours.

"There are medical processes and paper work and sometimes training," Tubman said, "But you are on your own to prepare your family."

Spouses chimed in with a list of stress factors that sound familiar: worry about safety, paying the bills, school and work, disciplining the children and the vacuum in the household when the service member is gone. Sometimes, another participant suggested, there can be a desire to "Just go, just leave the



Spc. Tonya Sigl and Connie Sprynczynatyk are pictured here with the spouses of military members in Ghana who taught them about the role of the *Magabdjia*, "leader of women." The African nation of Ghana and the N.D. National Guard have had a partnership through the State Partnership Program (SPP) since 2004. The SPP aligns emerging nations of Africa with National Guard organizations to exchange information and ideas.

dread and fears our Airmen, Soldiers and Families experience are common no matter where in the world you live.

The Ghanaian military forces frequently participate in United Nations peace-keeping missions and some of our seminar participants had deployed to Lebanon, Congo, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire. The record among our group was seven deployments and the longest one we heard about lasted 16 months, although six months is more common.

A veteran of several deployments, Tubman

Mawunea said, "It changes you."

During pre-deployment, Ghanaian service members experience a flurry of requirements similar to ours.

"There are medical processes and paper work and sometimes training," Tubman said, "But you are on your own to prepare your family."

Spouses chimed in with a list of stress factors that sound familiar: worry about safety, paying the bills, school and work, disciplining the children and the vacuum in the household when the service member is gone. Sometimes, another participant suggested, there can be a desire to "Just go, just leave the

worries behind."

## Leader of Women

Let me confess some ignorance. Before our trip, I understood our five-year partnership had come to the point where the partners had agreed on an area of need. I assumed Rob, Tonya and I would be conducting a family program seminar because the Ghanaian military had little or no family program and we've been developing a strong one. True? Only partly; their support system may not be a twin of ours, but there is support when families encounter problems.

Meet the *Magabdjia*. The word means "Leader of women." She has years of experience, she is willing to work on issues and she rises to this special position in the unit because the other women choose her.

By way of describing the *Magabdjia's* role, the group explained about allotments. When a service member deploys, he/she carves out a certain amount each month that is supposed to take care of all bills and family emergencies. The husband and wife are expected to negotiate this but sometimes, Joana Avevor said, "It's not enough. If the wife cannot agree with her husband about the family situation, she can go to the *Magabdjia*. If the allotment is not correct, the *Magabdjia* can talk to the commander."

Intrigued by the *Magabdfia* pyramid at unit, company and battalion levels, we decided to explore other components of the Ghanaian support network for spouses and families. We had some idea of their pre-deployment period and the similar challenges our families face during a deployment, but what about post-deployment activities? Do they, we wondered, have something like our family readiness groups, send-offs and welcome home events?

### The Same, Only Different

We broke into small discussion groups to learn more about Ghanaian family support and we heard familiar themes. There is a network of friends and family, the wives told us, that women rely on just as we do in the Family Readiness Groups. While the send-offs are conducted within the families, there is a public event upon return. Representatives of the families dress in the unit's colors and line the square. A ceremonial bouquet is presented and there may be a parade. After service members return, stress can appear.

In the small groups, we heard about participants' experiences with post traumatic stress and their observations of issues friends had dealt with. Inability to sleep, alcohol abuse and problems among family members were mentioned.

What is different between our range of services and theirs, we learned, is a formalized reintegration program. Seminar participants were intrigued by descriptions of the approaches we take to reintegration.

### "It Leads the Family to Grow"

Lest you be tempted to think about the negatives at this point, let me convey the sense of optimism we experienced. After hours of discussions about problems, one of the participants proposed a different way of looking at the challenges of frequent deployments and the sometimes too-short intervals between. "It leads the family to grow," he said, and heads around the room nodded agreement.

While the optimism was comforting, by the end of the seminar it was clear the participants also saw opportunities for program growth. When their commander, Maj. Gen. Peter Blay, joined our adjutant general, Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk, for a visit with the seminar group, Esther Golomeke asked if this event would be continued or if it was "...just a one-time thing?" Both commanders agreed that support for the families is too important *not* to continue.

### What's in a Name?

It was a privilege to learn from our participants something about the Ghanaian culture. We discussed foods and marriage customs. They asked as many questions about North Dakota as we asked about Ghana.

For example, our group included Mary, Grace, Samuel, Veronica, Isaac, Richard, Elizabeth and many other names familiar to Americans. I asked whether they all had another traditional name and we heard a chorus of "Yes, of course." It turns out there is a first name given to you,

depending upon the day of the week on which you are born. We became *Kojo* Rob Keller, *Akosua* Tonya Sigl and *Ama* Connie Sprynczynatyk.

On the last morning with our seminar group, we celebrated the week's work. We showed clips of news stories by Donnell Preskey, a reporter from KXMB in Bismarck, on the 957th Multi-Role Bridge Company's homecoming from Iraq, last summer's prairie fires and the Missouri River ice jams. We showed them our photographs of Accra, Takoradi and our week with them. They presented us with a taste of palm wine from a tree Tubman had tapped that morning. The women in the group gave us wood plaques cut in the shape of Ghana.

Best of all, the Ghanaians named us and welcomed us warmly, without reservation. What a gift, to find new friends in the neighborhood -- only 6,437 miles away.

### The Way Ahead

Threading through airports and waiting for long flights to end, Rob, Tonya and I discussed the future of the family program partnership. Based on the Ghanaians' interest in the services we provide to returning service members and families, reintegration may well be the focus for the future.

For those who follow up the work we began, be prepared: Touching the African sky can change your world.



Top photo, left to right, Connie Sprynczynatyk, Rob Keller and Spc. Tonya Sigl traveled to Ghana to lead a weeklong workshop on how to set up Family Readiness Groups. The Ghanaian military have been conducting peacekeeping missions for over 30 years, with six-month and one-year deployments being very common. Here they hold parting gifts from members of their class; wooden carvings of the outline of Ghana along with a pouch with the Ghana flag.



Bottom photo, Sprynczynatyk and Keller visit with members of their class. Keller said, "Our training was the first step in helping them set up and grow their FRG groups so that families left behind during deployments are able to cope with the long timeframe and work together to form a support group."

# The Auger Celebration



A view of the present-day Auger Inn.

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

By Chief Master Sgt. Brad Johnson  
119th Wing

I don't know that anyone can pin down exactly when the Auger Inn first came into existence. It probably wasn't too long after the first P-51 landed after the unit was organized in 1947. My guess is that it happened shortly after someone was spotted walking from the parking lot to the hangar with a case of beer and some "friends" following him to his destination. Initially, it was a pretty loose organization, housed in an old WWII barracks. Neil Miller once told me that the key to the place was conveniently hidden under the cigarette butt can by the front door. It was self serve; let yourself in, pay for what you drank.

In the late 50's when the "new" hangar was built, the club was moved to where the fitness center is today at the 119<sup>th</sup> Wing. It was open on Fridays then, until midnight or later.

On August 25, 1959 a Certificate of Incorporation was signed by the State of North Dakota officially registering the nonprofit corporation known as the North Dakota Air National Guard Noncommissioned Officers Club.

The original Board of Directors, seven brave men, including Fred Quam, Bill Pietch, Russ Bernstein, Bob Monson, Doran Lindsoe, Harlan Gunkel, and Amos Flaagen, signed their names on the dotted line, creating the foundation for generations to come.

First off, they probably had no idea what they were getting themselves into, but secondly they probably couldn't have dreamed that 50 years later we would still be celebrating.

A lot has changed over the years. For example, the term "spouse" cannot be found in the original bylaws, but "wives" would be afforded an honorary membership. I would assume that female noncommissioned officers were few and far between back then. They also state that anyone demoted below the rank of staff sergeant would cease to be a member of the club, and the wife of said member would cease to be an honorary member as well!

Today all members of the North Dakota Air Guard are a part of the club, from junior enlisted to senior officers. The club has changed its name to the 'Auger Inn All Ranks Club' and as a result of the countless hours our board of directors have volunteered, we have donated tens of thousands of dollars to local charities and civic groups. The Auger Inn was also rated "Best Seen to Date" by the Air Combat Command Unit Compliance Inspection Team in 2008.

On Aug. 22, 2009 we will be celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a Happy Hooligan Reunion. Doors will open following the Fargo Air Sho and there will be food, music and prizes. Everyone is welcome.

Our goal, or vision if you like, is for the Auger Inn to continue to be a valuable part of the N.D. Air National Guard another 50 years from now. We've survived many aircraft conversions over the years and weathered our mission changes. Through all of that, at the end of the duty day we've continuously had the Auger Inn, where we can stop to toast each other for a job well done.

# Inn ates 50 Years

## Memories From the 'Auger Inn All Ranks Club'

Essie Larson at a flight suit party at the club in the late 50s. Essie is the wife of Duane 'Pappy Larson', and the mother of retired Col. Tom 'TLAR' Larson.



"I do remember getting stranded at the club the year of that big blizzard when that person died on 19th Ave. We stopped at the club at 4 and by 5 the blizzard hit and no one was allowed to leave. The Auger Inn stayed open at least until midnight and they opened the kitchen and cooked for us. It was a lot of fun I remember!!"

-Retired Lt. Col. Diane Moderow

"I remember coming to the Headquarters building (then called the O & T) on a Friday afternoon to see someone in personal or finance about something or other and hearing the sound of a piano playing coming down the hall. It was Chief Master Sgt. Don Matson sneaking over early to set up the club. He always seemed to have time after the set up to play a tune or two. Don used to play at the downtown Elks Club and just couldn't get over it I guess. Anyone know where the piano is today? I Do!"

-Col. William Frahm (Ret.)

"Back in the late 70's and early 80's during the technician Christmas party, the Christmas tree would always disappear. The next day there would always be an announcement over the PA system asking for whoever took the tree to bring it back. One year it was found on the roof of the Headquarters building over the main entrance. The amazing thing is nobody ever found out who was taking and then returning the tree every year. There are a couple of us that know who it was hee...hee..hee."

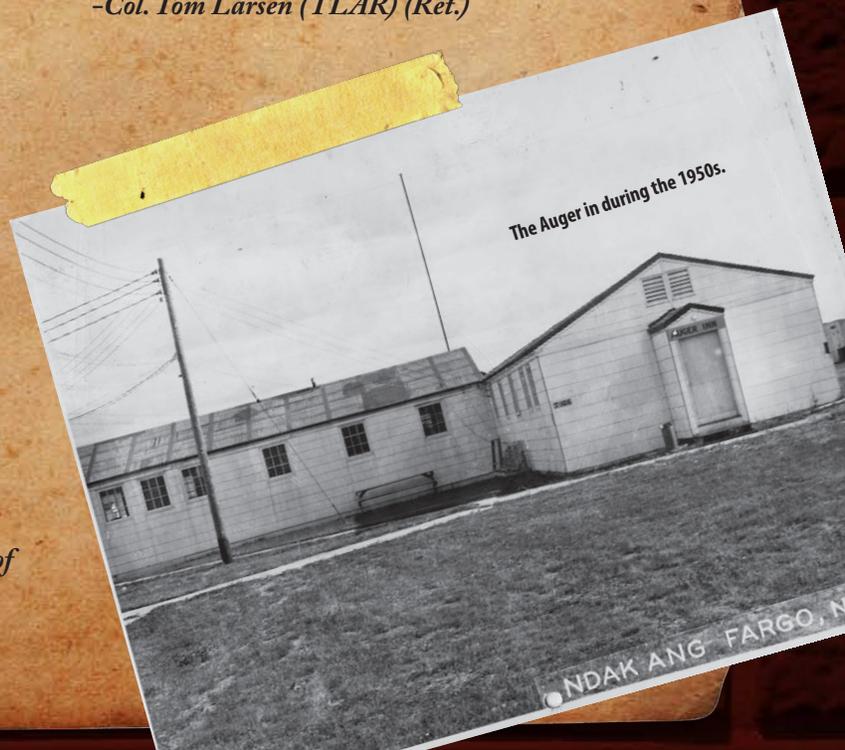
-Chief Master Sgt. Pete Lewis (Ret.)

"The Auger Inn was located in the old WWII dining hall, which was a wooden temporary building of the period. The west leg of the building was a bar, storage and dining booths; the east leg was a dining area with movable tables and dancing. In the late 40s to middle 50s, we overlaid the east leg with finished flooring. The buildings were on cement blocks and with a good jitter-bug on, the center supports usually collapsed! The center of the floor would drop 6" to 8". The party would end, we would drink up, go home and try again another day."

-Chief Master Sgt. Merv Beynon (Ret.)

One of my fondest memories of "The Club" was listening to Don Matson play the piano. Don was a long time bartender, as was his brother, and there was an old upright piano that always sat against the wall next to the bar. As the evening went on Don would occasionally come around the bar, push the piano out from the wall and start playing. When he would do that, everyone would gather around and listen or sing along. What a great guy and his piano playing will long be remembered by those that had the pleasure of being there."

-Col. Tom Larsen (TLAR) (Ret.)



The Auger in during the 1950s.



Left, Command Sgt. Maj. Steve Palmer gets a vision check from Dr. Brian Beattie, a civilian optometrist during Soldier Readiness Processing June 3. Palmer is part of the Kosovo Forces (KFOR 12) Task Force Falcon and will leave on a one-year deployment to participate in the peacekeeping mission in Kosovo.

Sgt. Ann Knudson



Courtesy Photo

Kim VonBank with the Freedom Community Credit Union ran the half-marathon during the Fargo Marathon on May 16 on behalf of fellow Happy Hooligan, Senior Master Sgt. Keith Krogen who is currently battling brain cancer. Krogen would like everyone to know how appreciative he is of all the support he has received from the unit and can't wait to get back to work again.



Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Grady Joseph Anderson, the son of Capt. Joseph Anderson, 119th Services Flight commander, and Master Sgt. Roxanne Anderson, of the 119th Wing, gets a chance to touch a living alligator May 17, during Happy Hooligan Zoo Day at the Red River Valley Zoo, Fargo, N.D. The Happy Hooligan Zoo Day is hosted by the North Dakota Air National Guard Family Program each year in May.

# Guardian Snapshots



Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Col. Robert Becklund, 119th Wing commander, checks identification cards at the entry gate of the North Dakota Air National Guard June 7. 119th Security Forces Squadron performs 100% ID checks for people entering the base. Col. Becklund took the opportunity to help the security personnel at the gate and experience a little bit about their job in the process, which he believes helps him manage base personnel.



Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Maj. Jason Newham, of the 177th Airlift Squadron, does a pre-flight inspection of a C-21 at the North Dakota Air National Guard May 20. This is the first time that the North Dakota Air National Guard C-21s have deployed to southwest Asia in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The Airmen will be supporting the mission in alternating shifts throughout the summer. The 119th Wing began flying the C-21s after the unit lost its 60-year fighter mission in January 2007.

# Putting On a Show

## 119th Wing Continues Long Tradition Supporting Annual Fargo AirSho

By Capt. Penny Ripperger  
119th Wing

What comes to mind when you think of watching death-defying stunt pilots gliding through the air or getting the opportunity to look up close at aircraft of our past? You may have heard the advertisements or talk around the community about the upcoming Fargo AirSho, featuring the Blue Angels scheduled to take place on Aug. 22-23.

Soldiers and Airmen may be familiar with the event, but many do not realize the contributions of the organizations involved and the massive coordination effort needed to put a show on.

"We've had a long history with the N.D. Air Guard. In fact, this year will be the 20-year anniversary of our partnership since we started in 1989," said Dick Walstad, Fargo AirSho co-chair.

Since its 20-year inception, the committee has made significant contributions with the proceeds of the event going to the community and the Air National Guard.

"In the late 90's we used the funds to start the Fargo Air Museum. Much of the museum was built with volunteer help from the Air Guard and airport," Walstad said. "Since then, we established a tradition that each year the monies raised from the Fargo Airsho would go to Fargo Air Museum, Roger Maris Cancer Center and special Air Guard events that can't be supported with government funds, like the Outstanding Airman of the Year (OAY) Banquet."

To date, the Fargo AirSho committee has contributed \$250,000 to the Fargo Air Museum and over \$50,000 to the Roger



The Blue Angels will be another part of this year's AirSho



Col. Rick Gibney, of the 119th Wing, visits with the AirSho flight director in 2003.

Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Maris Cancer Center.

In addition to contributing to the OAY banquet each year, the committee has given money to the Air Guard for scholarships. When the Happy Hooligans flew fighter aircraft, the committee also contributed \$5,000 to host a party each time the unit competed in the prestigious William Tell competition.

With the change of missions at the 119th Wing, many people, including Airmen and Soldiers, question how the Guard is involved with the AirSho event.

"Since we stopped flying the F-16s, people don't see our jets flying in the show anymore and think we are no longer part of this event - they're wrong. We are still very much involved," said Lt. Col. Michael DePree, member of the 119th Wing and military liaison on the Fargo AirSho Committee.

The Happy Hooligans play a vital role

in putting on the AirSho. Many areas on base, like the 119th Security Forces Squadron, function in a support role for the event.

"Our primary duties are to provide security for incoming aircraft, conduct crowd patrol and to just be on hand to respond as necessary if anything happens," said Senior Master Sgt. Ricky Shypkowski, 119th SFS superintendent.

Other areas on base, including emergency management, fire hall, maintenance, petroleum oil lubricants (POL) and the civil engineer squadron all play a significant role in the event.

"I would hate to even try to put on an air show without the Happy Hooligans. The equipment, expertise and spirit of the Hooligans are amazing and essential," Walstad said.

The AirSho committee begins planning for the event a year ahead of time



Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

Retired Happy Hooligan Jim 'Fang' Maroney, flies his "Super Chipmunk" aerobatic plane. Maroney is a Casselton native and has had an interesting career graduating tops in the "Top Gun" program, along with being a Northwest Airlines pilot and flew with the 119th in ND Air National Guard. "Fang" has always been a favorite at the Fargo Air Show.

due to the high demands and coordination needed to support the event.

DePree and Capt. Ryan L. Rastadt, (Chopper), also from the 119th Wing, act as the point of contact between the Fargo AirSho committee and the visiting Blue Angels.

"The Blue Angels give us about an 80-page manual to follow and DePree and Chopper are on top of all the many details that have to be dealt with. The Guard helps find the special equipment required of the Blue Angels and their facilities are ideal for the type of security that we need. We would not be able to take on an undertaking of this sort without the help of the Happy Hooligans," said retired Maj. Gen. Darrol Schroeder, AirSho Co-Chair.

The 119th Wing must also exercise with the City of Fargo to prepare for the event. On June 11, the Fargo Police Department, Fargo Fire Department, FM Ambulance, Salvation Army and the North Dakota Air Guard conducted an exercise to practice for a worst case scenario.

"Its good practice for all the agencies to get together to ensure that we respond to

any potential incidents as efficiently and effectively as possible," said Chief Master Sgt. Mark Solem, 119th Wing Fire Chief.

The hard work of all the agencies and volunteers involved have paid off and it shows by the many times the Blue Angels have come to Fargo to perform.

"We've been extremely fortunate. The Blue Angels get about 400 applications a year and they only do about 35 shows. They keep coming back to Fargo because the shows that we've put on have been so well run and again, that goes back to the Happy Hooligan support we receive," Schroeder said.

After each show, the Blue Angels give a critique based on how well the show was managed. The grade is a contributing factor to whether or not they come back again. In 2007, the last time the Blue Angels performed in Fargo, they ranked Fargo in the top three of all the shows they performed in that year.

Over 400 volunteers are needed to run the Fargo AirSho each year and the members of the committee who put in extraordinarily long hours to organize the event

do it all free of charge. This year it will cost the committee approximately \$400,000 to put on the Fargo AirSho. All proceeds beyond that will go to the charities and organizations as in the past.

"It's important for people to know what their tickets are going towards. The proceeds of this event support many people in our community. That's why I encourage our Airmen and Soldiers to buy tickets to this event and support the cause," DePree said.

Tickets to the show are \$20 at the gate and \$15 in advance. For more information about the Fargo AirSho, visit the website: <http://www.fargoairsho.com>

Information about the Fargo AirSho can also be found on Facebook and YouTube at:

[www.facebook.com/people/Fargo-Airsho/1276096834](http://www.facebook.com/people/Fargo-Airsho/1276096834)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAGZRLkqGQE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAGZRLkqGQE)



Senior Master Sgt. David H. Lipp

**Year of the NCO:** From left to right, Sgt. Justina Bilby and Sgt. Megan Doctor, both of the 191st Military Police Company, receive the Sergeant Audie Murphy award for excellence from N.D. Governor John Hoeven and N.D. Adjutant General Maj. Gen. David Sprynczynatyk during a freedom salute celebration May 31, at the Fargo Dome, Fargo. The freedom salute celebration is in recognition of the 191st Military Police Company's recent deployment and return from Iraq.